



Climate Education for All Summary

To reach the Climate Action Plan's goals, Vermonters need to be informed about energy and climate and about opportunities for action to reduce emissions and save money. **The Climate Action Plan** lists education for all as the **first Non-Energy Emissions Pathway** for Mitigation, noting that **education "is a vital part of solving the climate crisis" and that it "strengthens the success of every other pathway towards resilient climate adaptation"** (p.228). The report specifically calls out *Strategy 1: Provide funding for climate-related education at all levels, outreach, research, and technical assistance programs.* (p.228)

Roughly 68% of Vermonters report being worried about climate change and 80% say schools should be teaching about climate change ([Yale Climate Opinion Maps 2021](#)). VEEP is ready to help, providing climate and energy education in Vermont schools for over 40 years! Vermont needs increased climate education TODAY to help all Vermonters to take part in mitigation practices, access incentives, save money and increase resiliency.

We're asking for \$458,000 in one-time funding to support Climate Education for All. This includes:

(1) Launching a series of hands-on workshops for adults across the state in partnership with energy committees and efficiency services providers at libraries, municipalities and granges. These workshops will address "What can you do in your family and in your town to save money and reduce carbon emissions from heating and transportation?" The workshops would be paired with opportunities for community action, connecting with weatherization and heat pump providers, and incentive programs, and making changes in daily habits to decrease energy usage. Interested partners currently include Capstone, Button Up, Window Dressers, GoVT and Local Motion. This funding will focus on training community volunteers to sustain the effort without further State funding.

(2) An investment in our existing K-12 programming, including equipment and lessons for hands-on STEM lessons, professional development for teachers, including post-COVID outreach to and support for schools to tackle energy efficiency and climate resiliency in their communities. In 2022 we worked with 92 schools, loaning equipment to 77 classrooms and delivering workshops to 72 classrooms. We reached close to 3,000 students. This funding will focus on making teacher training available to any interested school (regardless of ability to pay) which will make this effort sustainable and avoid the need for future legislative funding.

Please see more detailed information on the following pages.

Sophia Donforth, Executive Director, sophia.donforth@veep.org
Andy Shapiro, Energy Engineer andy.shapiro@veep.org

CLIMATE EDUCATION FOR ALL -- Details

Vermont Energy Education Program

Sophia Donforth, Executive Director, sophia.donforth@veep.org

Andy Shapiro, Energy Engineer andy.shapiro@veep.org

What is the need?

- To reduce obstacles to climate action through education and partnerships with service providers
- To amplify collective efforts of the State and service providing partners to conserve energy, save money and increase climate resilience – in both school and public venues
- To provide an experiential understanding energy and climate as a basis for action

How will VEEP meet this need?

VEEP/NHEEP will provide hands-on, minds-on workshops in partnership with local and state initiatives to support electrification, conserve energy and improve climate resilience. Events will be held in public spaces such as libraries, granges, municipal buildings, senior centers, and schools.

Event organizers may choose from the following options based upon community interest and expertise of local action partners:

- Home Heat Transfer – understanding the importance of air sealing and insulation in saving energy and money when we heat our buildings. *Connects with weatherization initiatives.*
- Electricity Generation and the Grid – understanding how electricity is generated, where our power comes from, and how the grid is managed. *Connects well with general efficiency messaging and discussions about where electricity sources*
- Home Electrification – What are the various areas in the home to electrify? What are the range of costs, savings and incentives associated with each area? *Connects with State and Federal incentive programs*
- Transportation ReWorks – comparing the emissions and efficiency of several modes of transportation, and increasing familiarity with alternatives to single vehicle transit and the infrastructure needed to support it. *Connects well with initiatives to increase public transit ridership, carpooling, walking/biking, and town transportation plans.*
- Eco-Driving – how to get from place to place using less gas through careful driving habits, EV's and public transportation. *Connects well with initiatives to increase adoption of electric vehicles, public transit ridership and carpooling.*
- Modeling Climate Science – see (and measure!) the impact of carbon pollution in our atmosphere and learn about local impacts of a warming world. *General modeling of climate change—appropriate for starting a community discussion about local resilience planning.*

Who is the Target Audience?

People who are not already active on energy committees or deeply involved in climate work in the state. Adults who are at least one of the following:

- interested in saving money, and taking advantage of having help understanding energy efficiency incentives
- curious to learn more about the way the energy works
- interested in becoming more involved in their community

Our outreach will specifically target lower income households and rural communities, who can benefit most from energy saving choices that are available.

Venues might include:

- Public spaces (libraries, granges, town halls) in target communities for action partners (Button Up, Window Dressers, etc.)
- Businesses – workshops provided as part of a “lunch and learn” model, themes to align with incentives offered by the Federal and State governments. Workshops may align with the business’ work
- Senior Centers – themes chosen to reflect issues of local concern

Who Are Our Partners?

Confirmed interest: Window Dressers, Button Up VT (and other VEIC initiatives), Local Motion, Capstone Community Action. Other prospective partners: GoVT, local transit systems, Regional Planning Commissions

Operations

VEEP has already developed these workshops and the associated equipment. We have extensive and growing relationships with the action partners listed above, and with K-12 schools across the state. We will focus on training teachers and community partners to spread the reach of this effort. We have a robust evaluative survey system that allows us to review and adapt our programs based on participant feedback. VEEP needs funds to support a push to get these actions in place, including increased staff time and expenses, to create additional equipment kits for use in the community and to support an extensive outreach campaign.

The intention is to focus our efforts on training so that each of our programs in schools and communities results in greater knowledge and investment from the local community. In the school context this means professional development for teachers who will reach hundreds of students in the years to come. In our community programs, we will be looking for volunteers (likely members of energy committees) that would be able to participate in our workshops, and then use our equipment at subsequent events in their town.

Outreach

We can use existing VEEP K-12 school marketing strategies and modify them for public outreach. Efforts will include our newsletter, website and social media presence, as well as outreach to and mailing of a paper brochure and energy poster to targeted audiences (libraries, town halls, etc.) Some of these groups are already contacting us asking us for workshops geared at adults rather than the K-12 classroom.

Offering these workshops as part of events offered by our action partners will bring experiential energy and climate education to a broader audience, and makes use of their existing networks and systems.

Proposed Budget

We've requested \$458,000 in **one-time** funding from the state to cover costs of our work during a 2-3 year period. This is to cover additional outreach and training in VT K-12 Schools, and to launch this initiative for climate action education for adults.

Launching Climate Education for All

\$125,000 Preparation and delivery of workshops

\$23,000 kits and materials

\$10,000 evaluation

\$10,000 give-aways and prizes

\$40,000 outreach

\$20,000 Overhead

\$228,000 Sub-Total

With this funding we propose to offer 200 workshops over a period of three years and train volunteers and energy committee members to carry on this work in their communities.

Increasing our Reach in K-12 Schools

\$60,000 developing and delivering teacher training

\$80,000 delivering workshops and supporting teachers

\$20,000 Kits and materials

\$20,000 mileage

\$30,000 outreach

\$20,000 overhead

\$230,000 Sub-Total

With this funding, we propose to greatly increase our outreach efforts and our focus on professional development for teachers, so that energy and climate work becomes embedded in schools across the state. We anticipate increasing the number of teaching partnerships (workshops and ongoing support for teachers) by 50 over our 2022 levels for each of the next three years.